No. 586

In the

Supreme Court of the United States

OCTOBER TERM, 1963

In the Matter of the Petition of THE HOUSING AUTHORITY of the City of Seattle to Acquire by Eminent Domain Lot 8 of Block 68, Terry's First Addition to Seattle, for the Purpose of Providing Safe and Sanitary Accommodations for Persons of Low Income.

WALTER SCOTT BROWN and HELEN M. BROWN, husband and wife, *Petitioners*,

vs.

THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON IN AND FOR KING COUNTY, HONORABLE EDWARD E. HENRY, JUDGE, *Respondents*.

PETITION FOR A WRIT OF CERTIORARI TO THE SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

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THE ARGUS PRESS — SEATTLE WASHINGTON

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INDEX

Page

Jurisdiction
Statement of the Case
Questions Presented
Reason for Granting Petition
Conclusion

STATUTES

Revised Code of Washington, Ch. 3582
RCW 42.32.010 3.
42 U.S.C. §§ 1401, 1402, 1410

CONSTITUTION

United States Constitution, Fourteenth Amendment

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WALTER SCOTT BROWN and HELEN M. BROWN, husband and wife, pray that a Writ of Certiorari issue to review the Judgment of the Washington Supreme Court entered in the above entitled case on September 20, 1963.

JURISDICTION

The Judgment of the Supreme Court of Washington was entered on September 20, 1963. The jurisdiction of this Court is invoked under the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution since the petitioner's property is being deprived by a Washington

State agency without due process of law. This case also involves the United States Code, Title 42, Sections 1401, 1402 and 1410 and its implementation by an agency of the State of Washington.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE

The subject matter of this case is the manner and method by which the Seattle Housing Authority condemned petitioner's property. There was an adjudication of public use of petitioner's property by Judge Edward E. Henry of the Superior Court of the State of Washington which was subsequently affirmed by the Supreme Court of the State of Washington. The Housing Authority of the City of Seattle is a creature of the laws of the State of Washington organized and operating under the Revised Code of Washington, Chapter 35.82.

The condemnor. The Housing Authority of the City of Seattle proposes to expand its existing Yesler Terrace Housing Project by the erection of a high-rise structure containing approximately 300 apartments. The petitioner, a plastic surgeon in the City of Seattle, owns two lots in the immediate vicinity. One lot is immediately adjacent to the high-rise project on the east and is presently improved by petitioner's plastic surgery clinic and residence.

The petitioner's second lot is the subject of this condemnation action. It is presently used by petitioner as a parking lot for the convenience of the staff and patients at the clinic. No property is presently available in the area for parking as a substitute for petitioner's

lot and without adequate parking it is probable that the petitioner will have to move his clinic.

This condemnation involves an area which is only a small portion of an over-all project, called Wash 1-9. The basic project was ordered by Seattle Housing Authority Resolution 1158 as enacted on November 6, 1961. By Seattle Housing Authority Resolution 1198, the condemnation of the Brown property was ordered on November 26, 1962.

The basic resolution was adopted under circumstances disclosed in the Statement of Facts filed herein. The meeting was not held on the regular meeting date of the Seattle Housing Authority. No notice was given the press or the radio. The meeting was held at the Rainier Club, not at the Board's office, its usual meeting place. A private, upstairs room was used at the club. It was a luncheon affair and the public was not invited nor was any notice given to the public or petitioner.

The Seattle Housing Authority took a voluntary nonsuit in that condemnation action against the same property because of a direct violation of the State of Washington Statute RCW 42.32.010 set out in relator's opening brief in support of Writ of Certiorari.

On November 26, 1962, the Commissioners were read six, single space typed resolutions they had previously enacted in connection with this project. This meeting or reading session convened at 4:30 p.m. and adjourned at about 6:30 p.m. Consisting of 32 legal size pages, this allowed less than four minutes for each sixty (60) line page. Mr. Ross, the executive director of the Housing Authority of the City of Seattle could recall no discussion at the meeting: just reading.

Thereafter, a resolution of ratification was adopted, allegedly providing due process of law necessary to right the wrongs done at the Rainier Club.

In neither meeting, at the Rainier Club nor during the rapid-reading demonstration in 1962, was any member of the public heard on the merits of these resolutions.

It is the contention of the petitioner that the combined procedures employed by the Housing Authority Commissioners effectively denied all citizens, and petitioner in particular, due process of law.

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

Did the Seattle Housing Authority's secret clandestine meeting in the private Rainier Club, together with the non-deliberative, attempted ratification of the private meeting deny interested citizens and the petitioner of due process of law?

A Federal question of due process was raised at the trial court level, was presented to the Supreme Court of the State of Washington by Assignments of Error Numbers 1, 6, 9, 11 and 13, arguments appearing at pages 37 through 41 in Petitioner's Opening Brief in Support of Writ of Certiorari and at pages 1 and 9 through 11 of Relator's Petition and Brief for Rehearing.

The Supreme Court of the State of Washington passed upon these questions by stating: "The relators also say that the condemnation is a part of a project authorized at a clandestine meeting, contrary to RCW 42.32.010. That section provides that public notice shall

be given of board meetings at which resolutions are to be adopted. The record shows that such notice was given in this instance. The fact that the project was previously discussed at a private meeting, does not invalidate this later action, and the relators cite no authority so holding."

The record discloses that at the private meeting the enabling resolution giving a basis for the condemnation was actually adopted by vote. The second meeting, of which notice was given, involved only the reading and "ratification" of the prior resolutions without deliberation.

REASON FOR GRANTING PETITION

In this instance, the Supreme Court of the State of Washington has decided several questions of substance not heretofore determined by the Supreme Court of the United States, namely: Are the constitutional requirements of due process satisfied in a state which adopted the following statute:

> RCW 42.32.010
>
> No board, commission, agency or authority of the State of Washington, nor the governing board, commission, agency or authority of any political subdivision exercising legislative, regulatory or directive powers, shall adopt any ordinance, resolution, rule, regulation, order or directive, except in a meeting open to the public and then only at a meeting, the date of which is fixed by law or rule, or at a meeting of which public notice has been given by notifying press, radio and television in the county and by such other means as may now or hereafter be provided by law: Provided, That

> this chapter shall not apply to the state legislature, the judiciary, or to those regulatory orders of quasi judicial bodies applicable only to named parties as distinguished from orders having general effect on the public or a class or group.

where all deliberations and a formal vote were taken in secret, without the requisite notice, and only a perfunctory reading of a resolution and its ratification take place at a later, duly noticed meeting?

These public notice statutes are of recent origin and are designed to enable the public to attend, hear and be a part of the deliberations of public bodies.

The decision below is in direct conflict with the true concepts of due process and individual liberties. The question of actions of agencies of the State and local governments as to the requirements of due process and the procedural aspects of their actions are of widespread importance both to the governmental units involved, their bond counsel and the citizens of the United States.

The review of this secret, clandestine meeting together with the later speed-reading passage of the resolution without deliberation is necessary to determine what constitutes a public meeting that will give due process to persons affected. The growth of governmental agencies and bureaus and their increasing involvement in the lives of man has caused great concern to constitutional writers and thinkers who are concerned with concepts of individual liberties and open government.

The applicable statute of the State of Washington provided certain safeguards and rules of procedure so

that due process of law would result. These safeguards were ignored thereby resulting in the rule of men and not rule of law. This Star Chamber type of meeting is totally repugnant to our Constitution and is without regard to the individual liberties of persons involved.

CONCLUSION

It is submitted that the issue of due process as presented by the hearings, conduct, and meetings of governmental agencies is of fundamental importance and great magnitude as it relates to our concepts of individual liberties and open government and is a fit and proper area of review by the certiorari powers of the Supreme Court.

Respectfully submitted,

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